

ANTH3170: AMERICA: AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

M-F, 9 a.m. - 12 p.m.

HUMN 1B90

Maymester 2018

INSTRUCTOR: Allison Formanack

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OFFICE HOURS: Hale 135M, Tuesdays & Thursdays, 1 p.m. – 3 p.m.

COURSE DESCRIPTION: What is America? Who are the American people? How is American culture defined both “at home” and abroad? Using anthropological and historical knowledge, we will trace how American society, broadly defined, emerged from the precolonial era to the present day. Course readings cover far-reaching topics such as health care, immigration, race and ethnicity, religion, and social movements. Lectures will approach these pressing, yet sensitive, issues as they are lived and felt every day; that is, emphasizing the complexities, contradictions, and messiness of our social reality.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

- Students will learn and apply core anthropological concepts to several ethnographic cases throughout U.S. history.
- Students will engage in hands-on exercises and present to their peers findings of their own independent research on a given or chosen topic.
- Students will analyze their own U.S.-based experiences through directed research papers and projects such as ethnographic writing.

COURSE WEB SITE: This course utilizes the Canvas online course management system. Students should visit the course webpage at least once daily to download required readings and review upcoming assignments.

EVALUATION:

Class Participation (10%)

Regular attendance and your active participation will be crucial to your success in this course! Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class. No more than **two absences** will be excused. Students with **three or more absences** will be docked one-half letter grade for each additional class period missed.

Annotated Bibliographies (10%)

Summarizing long or dense readings is a useful and effective strategy for incorporating citations into writing assignments. Together, we will create an annotated bibliography for the benefit of the entire class. Students will be tasked with writing a 200-250 word summary of an assigned reading to be posted to the discussion forums on the course webpage **within 24 hours** after the lecture for which that reading was assigned.

Homework (15%)

These take-home assignments are meant to help you apply course concepts from lecture and the readings, as well as providing supplemental information for your midterm and final writing assignments. Students can either turn in worksheets during class as a hard copy, or digitally via Canvas.

Midterm Writing Assignment: The Spyglass of Anthropology (20%)

Be warned, this assignment requires spending time out in the “real world” and putting your ethnographic fieldwork skills to the test! Students will conduct **at least one hour** of participant-observation and analyze their fieldnotes with course concepts and readings.

Group Presentation: Historical Erasures (20%)

Working in pairs, students will give 10-12 minute presentations on a mostly-forgotten event from American history. As opposed to writing a formal paper, this assignment will allow you to work collaboratively with another student as you research, write up, and present to your classmates on a formative moment in United States’ history.

Final Writing Assignment: Autoethnography (25%)

For this assignment, you will write a mini-autoethnographic study of your American “hometowns,” i.e., the place where you grew up or where you have lived the longest in the United States. Students will select topics or themes from **at least two course lectures** to ground their analyses, and will incorporate references from class readings as well as external sources. Students will give short (3-5 minute) presentations on their papers during the final class.

Extra Credit: Students will receive **2 points** toward any assignment of their choice for completing this extra credit. (Note: You can post as often as you would like, however you will only receive extra credit for your initial entry.)

COURSE REQUIREMENTS & EXPECTATIONS:

Readings: There are no assigned textbooks for this course, however students will be asked to do a **significant** amount of reading. The majority of texts for this course will be academic journal articles and book chapters, with some primary historical documents as well as more recent news articles as supplementary readings. It is crucial to your success that you come to class having finished each of the readings assigned for that day and prepared to discuss specific points or themes.

Email Communication: Although students are welcome and encouraged to meet the instructor either (briefly) after class or during office hours, email is expected to be the

primary means by which out-of-class communication will occur throughout the course. It is recommended that you check your student email account at least once a day during the class to keep up with any announcements or changes to the syllabus. Similarly, you are invited to email the instructor any questions you have; however, please keep in mind that emails sent in relation to this course are *professional communications*. Emails should include a salutory address, be grammatically correct and without typos, be professional in tone and signed at the end.

Phone and Computer Usage: Phones, tablets, and laptops are distractions to students and their neighbors. Students are asked to silence and put away their phones when they arrive in class; anyone caught texting or playing on their phones during lecture will be docked participation points. Students are welcome to use laptops and tablets for the sole purpose of taking notes during class; similarly, if the instructor notices students using these devices to check their Facebook status or catch up on emails they will be docked participation points. If any of these devices become a problem or begin affecting class dynamics, these policies may shift.

ACADEMIC HONESTY, PLAGIARISM, AND THE HONOR CODE: Academic dishonesty or plagiarism will not be tolerated to any extent: this includes copying another students' work on an exam or writing assignment, not citing quoted sources, copy/pasting from Internet articles without citation, or completing assignments on behalf of another student. Students who plagiarize or engage in academic dishonesty will receive an automatic failing grade for the course. Violations of the CU Honor Code will be immediately reported to the Honor Code Office. For more information regarding academic honesty and the CU Honor Code, please visit the following websites:

- <http://honorcode.colorado.edu/>
- <http://www.colorado.edu/engineering/academics/policies/honesty>

STUDENT ACCOMMODATIONS: If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please inform the instructor as soon as possible. You will be asked to provide documentation from Disability Services (<http://disabilityservices.colorado.edu/>) so that proper accommodations may be arranged. If you have any questions regarding accommodations or how to obtain documentation for any disability, please contact Disability Services at (303) 492-871 or DSInfo@colorado.edu.

COURSE SYLLABUS

Week 1: Welcome to America

May 14: Course Introduction

May 15: Making the Familiar Strange

Readings: Horace Miner (1956) "Body Ritual among the Nacrima"
Lee D. Baker (2004) "Introduction: Identity and Everyday Life in America."
Zora Neale Hurston (1935) Mules and Men, Introduction

May 16: Before "America" Existed

Readings: Vine Deloria, Jr. (1988) "Anthropologists and Other Friends"

May 17: The Great American Experiment

Readings: The Declaration of Independence (1776) & U.S. Constitution
Fredrick Douglass (1854) "Claims of the Negro"
The Gettysburg Address (1863)

May 18: Health and Healing

Readings: Anne Fadiman (1997) "The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down"
Nancy Scheper-Hughes (2010) "Death and Dying in Anxious America"

Week 2: An/Other America

May 21: Historical Silences and Invisible Americans

NO LECTURE TODAY

Reading: Michel-Rolph Trouillot (1995) "An Unthinkable History"

MIDTERM WRITING ASSIGNMENT DUE (Canvas)

May 22: A Nation of Immigrants

Readings: Jason De Leon (2012) "'Better to be Hot than Caught': Excavating the Conflicting Roles of Migrant Material Culture"
Yen Le Espiritu (2001) "'We Don't Sleep around like White Girls Do': Family, Culture, and Gender in Filipina American Lives"

May 23: Untangling "Race" and "Culture"

Readings: Phillipe Bourgois (1995) In Search of Respect, Introduction and Chapter 1

May 24: Americans Behind Bars

Reading: Roger N. Lancaster (2010) "Republic of Fear: the Rise of Punitive Governance in America"

May 25: **GROUP PRESENTATIONS DUE (In Class)**

Week 3: The State of the Union

May 28: **No Class (Memorial Day Holiday)**

May 29: God and Politics

Readings: Sierra Bell (2017) "Rust Belt Revolt and the Failure of Big Data"
Patrick J. Buchanan (2015) "Is Third World America Inevitable?"
Steve Kolowich (2018) "State of Conflict"

May 30: Fight the Power!

May 31: America and the World

June 1: Who We Are, Where We're From

FINAL PAPER AND PRESENTATIONS DUE (Canvas & In Class)